

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-11

L-03 ACDA-08 NSAE-00 PA-02 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

TRSE-00 SAJ-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 H-01

NSC-04 SS-20 DRC-01 USSS-00 SY-04 /090 W

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

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AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, NL

SUBJ: DEFENSE MINISTER'S POSITION MAY BE IN JEOPARDY

1. SUMMARY: DUTCH DEFENSE MINISTER BREDELING HAS
STIRRED STORM OF CONTROVERSY HERE WITH PUBLICATION
AUGUST 28 OF INTERVIEW IN WEEKLY NEWSPAPER "VRIJ NEDERLAND."
VREDELING'S CRITICISM OF HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES SO
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SEVERE AND PERSONAL IN INTERVIEW THAT QUESTION OF RESIGNA-

TION IS REAL POSSIBILITY. BREDELING MEETS TODAY WITH PRIMIN DEN UYL AND OTHER CABINET MEMBERS TO DISCUSS HIS FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

2. ALL DUTCH NEWSPAPERS HEADLINE STORIES AUGUST 29 BASED ON LONG INTERVIEW BY DEFMIN HENK VREDELING WHICH APPEARED IN "VRIJ NEDERLAND." INTERVIEW REQUESTED SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, BUT TOOK PLACE DURING TWO DAYS LAST WEEK. DEFMIN'S PRESS SPOKESMAN HAS SAID THAT BREDELING SAW AND APPROVED OF INTERVIEW STORY BEFORE PUBLICATION. ("APPROVAL" MAY HAVE BEEN SIMPLE CHECK OF ACCURACY OF FACTS).

3. DEFMIN, WHO HAS LONG-STANDING REPUTATION FOR HIS BLUNT AND SOMETIMES UNCONSIDERED COMMENTS, SHARPLY CRITICIZED SOME OF HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES IN WHAT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS AN INTEMPERATE INTERVIEW. HE QUOTED AS SAYING THAT "THE LABOR PARTY IS AS NATIONALIST AS IT CAN BE. JOOP DEN UYL IS THE BIGGEST NATIONALIST THAT EXISTS. I TOLD HIM THAT TO HIS FACE IN A MINISTER'S COUNCIL MEETING." COMMENTING ON THE CABINET AND ITS CONSIDERATION OF HIS DEFENSE NOTE HE SAID, "THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT IS IS ALL ABOUT. THEY ARE JUST SHEEP. AFTER I HAD MADE MY SPEECH, I HAD IT WON. I AM NOT IMPRESSED BY ALL OF THE HASSLE. IF THE PVDA (LABOR PARTY) WANTS TO ECONOMIZE IN AN UNREASONABLE WAY ON DEFENSE, THEY HAVE HIRED THE WRONG MAN."

4. VREDELING SAID THAT IN RUNNING HIS OWN MINISTRY HE WAS IN THE LEAD. IF HE HAD TO, HE WOULD "WALK OVER" HIS SUBORDINATES, BUT MAX VAN DER STOEL (MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS) WOULD NOT." REGARDING THE NATO DPQ, VREDELING SAID THAT HE HAS FOUND THAT HE MUST HANDLE IT HIMSELF, BUT VAN DER STOEL "RUNS BEHIND (HIS ADVISORS) WITH HIS FUNNY FACE. DOES HE EARN 120,000 GUILDERS A YEAR FOR THAT? IT IS TOO MUCH. MINISTERS SHOULD EARN ONLY 30,000 PER YEAR, AND THEN WE WOULD SEE WHICH ARE THE GENUINE ONES."

5. COMMENTING ON NATO SEC GEN LUNS, VREDELING SAID THAT HE FINDS HIS TYPE OF MENTALITY SO ALARMING. "THAT MAN IRRITATES ME TREMENDOUSLY. IF I EVER GET HIM BEFORE MY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FEET, AGAIN I WILL KICK HIM INTO THE GOAL. HE TALKS WITH THE BRAINS THAT HE HAS, AND THAT IS NOT MUCH." VREDELING ALSO WAS BLUNT IN HIS DESCRIPTIONS OF ECONMIN LUBBERS AND DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE MINISTER PRONK.

6. REACTION AMONG DUTCH POLITICIANS HAS BEEN SHARP AND SWIFT. FORMER DEFMIN DE KOSTER HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HE WILL PUT QUESTIONS TO PRIMIN TODAY, AND IF NO SATISFACTORY

ANSWERS FORTHCOMING WILL CALL FOR PARLIAMENTARY INTERPELLATION. PVDA SECOND CHAMBER LEADER VAN THIJN AND PARTY CHAIRMAN VAN DER LOUW HAVE TRIED TO CALM SITUATION, BUT EVEN THEY ARE QUOTED AS CALLING IT "AN UNACCUSTOMED INTERVIEW FOR A MAN IN HIS POSITION."

7. INTERVIEW MAY RESULT IN VREDELING'S RESIGNATION. HE SAID HIMSELF IN INTERVIEW, "I FEEL THAT I WILL HAVE TO RESIGN AFTER THIS INTERVIEW. IF I REALLY GET INTO TROUBLE BECAUSE OF IT, I WILL NOT WANT TO STAY ON."

8. DUTCH CABINET MEETING AFTERNOON AUG 29 AND WILL DISCUSS SITUATION. CABINET OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN ASKED REFRAIN FROM COMMENTING ON SITUATION, AND PRIMIN DE UYL HAS SAID HE WILL HAVE NO COMMENT UNTIL HE CAN TALK TO DEFMIN. INTERVIEW COULD COMPLICATE TO SOME EXTENT DUTCH PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE OF DEFENSE PAPER WHICH SCHEDULED BEGIN SEPTEMBER 23, AS WELL AS VREDELING'S SCHEDULED TRAVEL TO US AT INVITATION SECDEF TO DISCUSS F-104 REPLACEMENT. TANGUY

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